

Jeremiah VI. 4.

*Wo unto us for the Day goeth
away, for the shadows of the
Evening are stretched out.*

THE word, *Wo*, is often mentioned in Scripture ; especially in the Old Testament, and is a relative Term, significant of Evil and Misery to come. For the same *Wo*, which is now denounced against such or such People, will after this Life is ended, fall down upon them in Punishment and Misery. Hence doth arise that *Thought and Searching of Heart* in the Creature towards the Creatour, who is the Lord our God. A doubt and fear doth naturally spring up in our minds, as if God would inflict pain and make us miserable in the future State, and thereupon from this thing of Death, which is the Inlet and Entrance thereinto, we expect no Good but Evil. Here again our Spirits may be quiet and satisfied, for it is evident, there are several things which we are greatly afraid of at first apprehension and thoughts concerning them ; But when we have experienced the very same thing it self we find no dreadfulnes or Evil at all in it, but rather good and conveniency : So that according to the common saying herein, *We are more frightened then hurt*, and such may easily be. Yea certainly so it is to the Children of God, who are *Heirs of Salvation*, which includes in it self both *Life and Immortality*.

There is a visible reason of that natural fear of Death, because it is altogether evil and to be abhorred what is

seen to befall the Body, as Pain, Languishing, Weakness, distortion of countenance, and then lying in the Grave and *seeing Corruption*, and such like. And yet all these Evil and Terrible things do no more touch, nor yet affect the man himself, that is, his Soul, than when the *Angel of the Lord smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, and his Chains fell off from his hands*. As all this was no great hurt to the Soul, nor yet to the Body of *Peter*: Even so it will be when the Angel of Death shall knock off these Chains of Flesh wherein and wherewith at present we are holden and fettered; then also the Soul is *Raised up out of its earthly Habitation* (see *Zech. 2. 13.*) and returns and ascends up to *God that gave it*.

Nevertheless still there being a *Wo* pronounced in the Text indefinitely against us, which signifies as if it doth pertain to all Mankind both good and bad, Saint and Sinner; and every one, whither Godly or Ungodly, finding within himself some grief and vexation, fear and anguish at this consideration of his present life going away, and at last it will come quite to an end. We must not flatter nor delude our selves as if there was nothing at all to be feared in it, for this *Wo* pronounced by the Spirit of God, doth seem to presuppose and relate unto some future Evil. Again, whatever is Nature General and Universal in every one, as the fear of Death is, This same thing can never be in vain, but there is some reality to which it hath Respect.

The Apostle saith, *As touching Brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are taught by God to love one another*. So here it may be reasoned. There is no need to be taught out of the Scriptures, that our present life and time goeth away. For by the common knowledge and experience that God hath given to every Man, they are sensible already: Nay, they must know it whither they will or not, that their life and their Time goeth away. But God willing more abundant to shew unto the heirs of promise the Immutability of his counsel herein. As also, that the common and multitude of Mankind may be more without excuse if they have not provided for their latter end. I

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concerning this (as here it too commonly happens) that *Man also knoweth not his time, As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the Birds that are caught in the Snare, so are the Sons of Men Snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them.* To give yet more repeated warning of all this God hath ordered it to be written also, how that our Life and our Time goeth away. For so it is expressed in the words of our Text, *Wo unto us for the Day goeth away, for the shadows of the Evening are stretched out.*

The words are Metaphorical and signifie the very same as what is aforementioned, that our life goeth away. But the Metaphor seems to be borrowed from the Sun that greater light, which God Created and placed in the Firmament to Rule over the Day, and to divide the Light from the Darkness. For as long as that is above our Horison, than it is Day; but when it moves beneath the Horison, then the shadows of the Evening are stretched out and the Night comes on.

Again it is not unknown to any one that is understanding in the Scriptures, that the time of Mans present Life is often expressed by this manner of speech, *his Day.* If thou hadst known in this thy Day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. To Day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart as in the Day of Provocation, and as in the Day of temptation in the Wilderness. I have spread out my hands all the Day unto a Rebellious people. For he saith, I have heard thee in an accepted time, and in the Day of Salvation have I succoured thee. Behold now is the accepted time, Behold now is the Day of Salvation. In all these and alike places the word, *Day*, signifies all the time of Mans present life here on Earth. And so it doth in this place of Jer. 6.

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I shall not confine my self to the primary intent, or exact coherence of the words, as they are in the Text, but I shall treat of them in the large and common signification aforementioned, How that our Life and Time here on Earth passeth away, and because I am given to understand, that several do impute it as

a fault and defect in my preaching, In that I go on altogether in one continued discourse. But I do not so much make mention of the words, *First, Secondly Thirdly*, as other Ministers and Preachers do, which as they say is more for help of the memory, and for the edification of the hearers. Therefore I who have thought good to *become all things to all Men, that I might gain* Some, have thought good to handle this our present Text in the following method of these two propositions, and afterwards I may draw from thence some Practical Inferences, which is commonly called the use or Application,

From the words, *Wo unto us for the Day goeth away*, I shall endeavour to shew, together with the Reason or Reasons thereof, that it is a melancholy and sorrowful consideration in all people, to consider thoroughly, how that our present Life goeth away: And this I gather from the first introductory word, *Wo unto us*.

Secondly, Because that all the *Wo's* or Threatnings denounced in Scripture are therefore made known to the Inhabitants of the Earth, in order that they may take warning and avoid that same *Wo* or Threatning (*Thus Saith the Lord, Behold I Frame evil against you, and devise a device against you*. Here is the Threatning, but immediately the way is shewn how the same may be avoided, *Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good*. Jer. 18. 11.) I shall therefore again endeavour to shew from the Scriptures and from the truth of things, how our Life and Conversation may be so ordered aright, that the Salvation of God may be shewn unto us; and then though our Life goeth away, yet we shall avoid the *Wo* that it will not belong unto us. Can any matter be more useful and comfortable than this last, wherefore it is *worthy of all acceptation and attention even from the people of the World*, as well as from Believers. For it is not a going after vain things that cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. But *Christ* the Eternal word, and the words

words of his truth, do profit and deliver from the evil day, and from the *wrath to come*.

As to the first thing proposed to be spoken unto, As *Baruch* did say, *Wo is me now ; for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow*, So here some people may be apt to think, *Wo unto us Mortal Creatures*. We do not care to hear much of this, for this will be to add grief to our sorrow. We are so sensible of it already, that we would not have it yet made more sensible and afflicting by more doleful words concerning it. There is no need to rub up an old sore, which doth Pain and Ake already. But here to pursue the same similitude, it is good and sometimes necessary to lance a sore in order to the cure of it. So likewise the very same stands in the Nature and connexion of things, It is good to know the very worst of things, if we would have them be remedied and made better, As so is our case and subject in hand, to which the thread of our following discourse may lead and shew,

It may be affirmed, That all the Grief and Sorrow which we have in this World, doth tend or relate unto this ground thereof, how that our life goeth away. Though it be deemed at first to proceed forth from some other outward cause, yet it may be brought back to this original cause ; such or such People are therefore Melancholy, Sorrowful or Troubled, because the day of their life goeth away. For as life is the first thing loved and desired, because by it we are rendred capable to relish and enjoy all other things : So it is proportionable Grief and Vexation in the Creature, to think that at length it must part there withall.

This is the sting of Poverty (which is esteemed the worst of outward evils for it is of longest duration and commonly extending throughout ones life) for a thought of unbelief doth arise in the heart, as if this vain fugitive life which is *as a vapour and continueth not*, was our all. And thereupon is unexpressible Grief and Vexation that here we should *have our evil things* and not our *good things* also, as well as others. Especially when the language of unbelief whispers farther, that they

are but once to be had for all. But here again, let the full assurance of Faith once come in concerning that future and endless life, wherein it shall be said and fulfilled as to this than past life, *Son, remember that thou in thy life time received'st thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is Comforted and thou art Tormented.* This same consideration and knowledge before hand will make it both tolerable and easy to receive evil things here, and also to be fearful of receiving good things; for so it is esteemed and called by the people of the World, the immoderate use of Corn and Wine.

Again, To go unto other instances, This same is the thing which makes sickly People, or who are in declining or old Age, so Fretful Wasplish and Froward or Envious. The same is likewise observed of deformed or crooked people, as also of old Maidens who are not given to Marriage, And so it is of Eunuchs or insufficient People. For in these and alike cases *The eyes of all look unto thee.* The thoughts of the hearts of these Creatures, who find themselves miserable and defective in some one thing, are towards their invisible Creator And a reasoning doth arise within them, which doth terminate in secret indignation and vexation, Why shouldst thou not make me as happy and compleat, or do the same for me, as for my fellow Creatures?

These thoughts should be silenced again with the consideration of God's absolute sovereignty, *Hath not the Potter power of the Clay, to make one vessel to Honour and another to dishonour?* God is glorified in the several variety of his works. He may do what he will with his own, and who may say unto him, what dost thou? We should shew our selves contented and patient, and thus glorify him however he hath formed us. *Neither let the Son of the stranger that hath joyned himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: Neither let the Eunuch say, Behold I am a dry Tree.* In both these sayings of theirs, there is an inward repining because they are not made and placed in the same advantages and priviledges, and capable to enjoy the same delights with their other fellow

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fellow Creatures. But what saith the answer of God their Creator unto them? *For thus saith the Lord unto the Eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me and take hold of my Covenant, even unto them will I give in my house a place and a name, better than of Sons and of Daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Also the Sons of the stranger that joyn themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his Servants, Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it and taketh hold of my Covenant: Even them will I bring to my Holy Mountain, and make them joyful in my House of prayer, Their Burntofferings and their Sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine Altar, Isa. 56. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* Here the Blessing and Promise is proportioned; yea it is more than equivalent to what they complained of and murmured at. But from hence we may learn, that whatever our failure is of the common accomplishments and endowments of humane Nature, and in whatsoever we come short of the rest of our Brethren which they have and we have not; here let us be sure to serve God and be obedient unto him, which is expressed in all those apt phrases of the Holy Ghost, *That keep my Sabbaths and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my Covenant and joyn themselves unto the Lord, and love the name of the Lord to be his Servants.* If we are carefull and diligent and constant to do all this, God will assuredly make up for our imperfection (which we are apt to suppose our present misery) in the time of the *Restitution of all things*: Even what shall answer in kind to that same failure and imperfection, as so is giving to the Eunuchs a place and a name better than of Sons and Daughters. And to the Son of the stranger that had said, *the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people,* him will he bring to his Holy Mountain and make him joyful in his House of prayer Which is not separating him from his people. for there it is that his people are gathered and assembled together.

It doth indeed seem disingenuous (for it is not altogether so worthy as what proceeds from the principles

of Love Prosperity and Thankfulness) when people are as it were forced and driven to fear and serve God out of a sense of their Misery and Affliction. But since there is a degree and tincture of that in the most healthful and prosperous person, for he also is Subject unto Affliction and Misery through the fear and approach of Death. And God doth accept of such a service though it is joyned with such thoughts of Heart, as may be understood from *Isa. 56. Dent. 4. 30. 31.* Therefore receive and follow this instruction, All ye that shall hear or read these words, O Man or Woman the more miserable thou art as to this world : Do thou so much the more serve God and abound in well doing ; and than it will be better for thee at the end and distribution of all things, then if thou hast been the most happy person that ever lived on this Earth.

When our Soul is vexed and disquieted within us, Either because we have not good and comfortable things here, or because whatever delights soon passeth away, and we are gone, there commonly at the very same time doth spring up a root of unbelief, as if we were to be no more for ever. And we being told and apprehensive that there is a *good thing* set out for the Sons of Men ; Hereupon indignation and anguish doth arise that our time here should pass away, and yet that same good thing is not had by us. Hence also is secret vexation when the Natural ends of our Creation are not answered, And so pursue the reasoning part of all Trouble, Melancholy, Sorrow, or such like, and it will at length tend to this that therefore *our Soul is full of troubles* because *our life draweth nigh unto the Grave*, *Psal. 88. 3.* Thence doth arise more fretfulness of temper when the sting of Death doth put it self forth yet nearer towards us. The reasonable Creature expected to have good in this life, but the day goeth away and the good is not had ; *The summer is ended, and we are not saved.* And than again, unbelief doth dictate and whisper, that if the *good thing* be not had here, we know not when it will be had. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins : So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast*

fore thee, Psal. 73. 16, 21, 22. This last is just to be sensible of and groan under the present pain, but not to apprehend any thing further. And so is every one merely as he is a Man. But than as a Believer he is carried and advanced higher, even to speak after that manner as he doth in the following verses, *Nevertheless I am continually by thee : Thou hast holden me by my right hand.* Here he comes to the knowledge of his Creator and Preserver, and than afterwards he hints forth, how that God will be the restorer of Mankind, by giving them a Resurrection and future state. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.* This Faith and Knowledge of futurity, is consolatory to all present Grievs, Pain or Trouble. As we are reasonable Creatures, so we should use and exert forth this same reason when we are amidst and under affliction,

Why (It is an Adverb of Interrogation and Reasoning) *art thou cast down O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Here the Psalmist doth endeavour to quiet his dissatisfied Spirit with this short thought and speech, *Hope in God.* But as it is elsewhere written, *I remembered God and was troubled.* Even so here the cure and remedy is to rise the same way, as the Grief and Malady doth. For as God is the Creator and orderer of all things, and as himself speaks in his word. *Shall there be evil in a City and the Lord hath not done it ?* And it is expressly said, *That the Lord doth cause grief.* So of all the griefs and evils which poor Mankind do endure in this vale of tears, it is supposed that God hath an hand in it and that he is the Authour and Ordainer of them, which indeed is true ; and thence it is, because *no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous.* That hard thoughts do arise in the hearts of some against his Divine Majesty, who either do not believe, or not know thoroughly and consider further. that the same chastening doth afterwards yield the Peaceable fruit of Righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby, Heb. 12. 11. For the
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Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men, Lam. 3. 31, 32, 33. To such people who have Faith and Spiritual knowledge, all the griefs and miseries of this present life, do but lightly affect them: Because all things here are so very little, fugitive and vain, and nothing here is so evil but what man can be endured, and the Spirit of Man will bear up against it, as to outward temporal things. But the great thought and searching of heart is concerning what is said in this same Lamentations, *That the Lord will not cast off for ever.* And so how God will shew and approve himself unto us throughout eternity, Hence doth arise all the fear and doubt. But here again this same word speaks peace to the Soul, *Hope in the Lord for I shall yet praise him, for he is the health of my countenance and my God.* The object of hope is good things, or an expectation of good things; and here is speech of assurance, *I shall yet praise him.* Indeed it will be the business and employment in Heaven of such Souls as shall be saved, to praise God for that exceeding and eternal Blessedness which he will give unto them, and invest them withall; and make it so sure unto them, that it shall never be taken from them, nor they from it. There it is, and there only that we will rejoyce in thy Salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners; even when we have scaled and are ascended up into the Kingdom of Heaven. Which from the days of John the Baptist Suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. He that overcomeith, I will his God and he shall be my Son. And we ought in the mean while to praise our God for giving unto us exceeding great and precious promises: For affording us the means of grace, and for the hope of Glory; and for putting us into a possibility of seeking now, and at last of obtaining those great and glorious things that are spoken of thee, O City of God,

Amidst all the castings down and disquietudes of Soul, Under all the thoughts which trouble us, &c.

should go on still in the way of Duty, with this Faith and assurance, *I shall yet praise God*. Though perhaps the affliction is so sore, and the disappointment so vexatious, that we are tempted in heart in like manner as *Job's Wife* did him, *curse God and die*. We may beat back and answer the temptation with a like saying of his, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women speaketh*. For this would be the utmost folly that can be, if we should go the way and do those things to be miserable here, and miserable hereafter also; as that would be if we should curse him whom we ought to praise. What if we do now receive evil at the hand of God, nothing is so sure as that we shall receive good at the latter end; provided that like unto his Servant *Job* we do not sin in the mean while, nor yet charge God foolishly.

I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God. This thing, *health of my countenance*, is a relative term and doth answer unto and presuppose some sickness of Body or Mind, which the Psalmist in probability was then under. As sickness of Body is a forerunner of dying and Death, the Subsequent word, *My God*, contains in it life for evermore. For the same Creator that gave life at first, will again renew and restore it. *Who turneth Man to Destruction, will say, return ye Children of Men*. Herein he doth take care of and provide against the evil of Mortality, Corruption and Dissolution. The same God, who is a very present help in the time of trouble, is also all things sutable and proportionable to the several needs and requirings of his Creatures. *For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat*. Now what is more proper and sutable under scorching heat, than to get into the shade, and so when a storm beats upon us to get somewhat for refuge from it.

As it is written, *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall also the Son himself be Subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all*. So in the future state God will be all in all towards the making up the perfection and happiness of his Creatures

tures ; That he shall not be ashamed to be called their God. By Providing for and securing unto them things worthy of so great and good a God, and as much as a Creature can receive. Behold what a mighty word of consolation is here ! As also it is a most quickening Exhortation to enforce that of the Apostle. *What manner of persons ought ye to be in all Holy conversation and Godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ; that ye may get the favour and love of God whilst ye are yet in the way.*

But if these things are so (as most certainly they are) then some may be apt to put me in mind of my Text and ask how it comes to pass that a *Wo* is pronounced, for the day goeth away ? Which going away of the day doth set us yet nearer to these happy things. Might it not be more properly said instead of that *Wo* pronounced, Blessed and Happy it is for us that the day goeth away. And truly because of that vanity and vexation of Spirit which is in all things under the Sun. Because of that Tedioufness and Irksomeness of life ; because of that small variety of all the things below ; and it is all but almost the same thing over and over again. In my thinking it would be *Wo* unto us if the day did not go away. For we should be even weary and not able to abide here for ever if we might abide so in this state and as things now are.

But the answer to the former part of this objection may be had by discoursing on our second Proposition, *viz* That Because that all the *Wo*'s and Threatnings denounced in Scripture are therefore made known unto the Inhabitants of Earth, in order that they may take warning and avoid that same *Wo* or Threatning, we are to learn from the Scriptures and from out of the truth of things, how our conversation may be so ordered aright, that the Salvation of God may be shewn unto us. And then though our life goeth away, we shall avoid the *Wo* that it will not belong unto us.

This is most certain, that a *Wo* doth belong unto us, and will at last fall down upon our head to our endles confusion and misery, if we do not finish that work which God our Creator sent us severally on this Earth for to do. Said *Jesus* the forerunner, who entred before us into the vail. *I must work: the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* Christ's work was laying the foundation for all to build upon: He finished the Work which God gave him to do. And so every Soul should Work out that which he hath wrought and accomplished for us. Which same Work is to be done in this life, that being the accepted time for the Night or darkness of Death draws on, and there is *No work, nor devise, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.* And therefore if we neglect to finish that Work, *Wo* unto us for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the Evening are stretched out. *The Son of Man hath given to every Man his work, and commanded the Porter to watch.* So that of necessary consequence there must be a *Wo* if that time should slip away, and the same Work is not done for which that same time was originally set out and intended. There is the same rule of contraries: And seeing that the Scripture pronounces that *Servant blessed whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.* Then on the other hand, that *Servant* or rather idle Person, is cursed and a *Wo* is unto him, if the Lord when he cometh shall not find him so doing, but loytering, or doing that which is sinful or evil.

There is a *Wo* pronounced against, or doth belong to every Sin, Iniquity, Transgression, Disobedience or any manner of evil. As appears both from the old Testament and the New. In both which we find this word *Wo* spoken forth against them; and where it is not spoken forth in expresse words; Nevertheless it may be understood that it doth appertain thereunto. *For the*

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word of God spoken (or written) is stedfast and every disobedience and transgression receiveth a just recompence of reward.

Asafore said, that all trouble, grief or such like doth hence arise, because our life goeth away : So likewise our sorrow may be reduced and brought back to the original cause, Because we have sinned. Both these observations agree and meet together in one. The matter truly is this, We are sorrowful because we have sinned, and we are sorrowful because our Life goeth away. For we are afraid that a Punishment (which will make miserable) will be inflicted on us for the same sin, after this present Life (which is now going away) shall be ended.

¶ Now the Decree, Justice and Will of God stands on this wise, Sin committed must have its Punishment to be inflicted unless the same sin is pardoned. Hence the Soul is in continued fear and doubt until she hath the Reconciliation of God ; Until she hath his Voice and Spirit witnessing from within her self, *Son or Daughter, be of good cheer, Thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Again, seeing that we have all sinned and are worthy of punishment after this life shall be ended, here we should cry mightily unto God and *offer up strong crying with tears in these days of our flesh, that we may be heard in that we fear before him.* And like our Father Jacob wrestle with God in effectual fervent and continued Prayer until the breaking of the day of immortality. And be yet more earnest and importunate with God by how much the nearer it is to the day breaking, as the Soul is yet nearer breaking forth out of the shell of the Body into the World to come, the place of eternal and unchangeable light. *And we will not let God go except he Bless us, with the Blessing which the Lord hath commanded even life for evermore ;* Immediately after this life, which is as a vapour and continueth not, shall be ended.

Saith Job to God, *I have sinned. What shall I do to thee O thou preserver of Men ? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to my self.* Chapter 7. v. 20. This last confirms the truth of what was just now spoken, That sorrow is because of sin, and

as a consequent thereunto : for therefore it was because Job had sinned, he was a burden to himself. The verse immediately following doth shew and intimate that there is sorrow and fear in the Soul for want of forgiveness of sins, as appears from this Pathetical and earnestly desired question, or rather it is a kind of exhortation in Prayer. *And why dost thou not pardon my Transgression and take away mine Iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust and thou shalt seek me in the morning and I shall not be.* If we were sure that God would do thus, we could as contentedly and without fear lye down in the Grave as in a bed of Roses or Violets, or as we take our common rest by Night, which the Holy Ghost doth give us here to understand by this phrase, *I shall sleep in the dust.* Now there is nothing of dreadfulnes or evil in sleep.

The Scripture is all along consonant and agreeable to it self in every thing, especially in this truth, how that the *sting of Death is sin*. So that it would be neither dreadful nor evil, if this same sting was plucked out or (what is equivalent) and tantamount thereunto) if this same sin was pardoned and taken away. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.* (In the margent there it is, speak to the heart) *And cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,* Isa. 40. 1, 2. In these words again, the word of consolation is contained, *her iniquity is pardoned.* For I do hereby appeal to the conscience of all those who shall hear or read these words whither this is not speaking comfortably to ye, or speaking to your heart ; that is, what answers to your hearts desire and wish, to have assurance, that now thine and my warfare here on Earth doth draw so very nigh to be accomplished, that here we have our iniquity pardoned. If the Lord grant me this my request, as the same is my daily Prayer (I would I could, truly say, my constant endeavour was so likewise, as is hereafter explained) I know not what I could desire better on this side of Heaven. For if my iniquity is pardoned, then

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that thing is taken away which only hinders any ones entrance into Heaven.

As touching, whither our iniquity be pardoned or not; is the chiefest fear and trouble to knowing people and believers, which they have when they do walk softly all the residue of their years in the bitterness of their Soul. The Scripture token and evidence whereby we may know vvither our past iniquity is pardoned or not, is according as vve are *cleansed from all unrighteousness*, for the time to come. *If he that giveth strength and power unto his people* Psal. 68. 35. Doth give Strength and Povver to abstain from the like for the future. Thus much is gathered from that of the Apostle, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, 1 John 1. 9. This Scripture is not to be taken piece meal, but all together. So that according as any one is *cleansed from all unrighteousness*, That is cleansed from every thing vvhich is contrary unto or different from that great and compleat Rule of Righteousness: This is a sure token that thy sins are forgiven thee.

And also, when the Prophet *Isaiab* saith, *That the iniquity of Jerusalem is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins*. Hence it may be reasoned and concluded in the like manner. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World*, 1 Cor. 11. 32. When we have afflictions and troubles, hereby God doth punish us in this World for our sins, that we may be spared in the World to come. This also is some comfortable evidence that our iniquity is pardoned. For as the Apostle saith, *Some Men's sins are open before hand, going before to Judgment, and some Men's sins follow after*, 1 Tim. 5. 24. So the sins of some people are punished in this World, that they may not be punished after the day of Judgment. So the punishment of the sins of other people, is respited and forborn in this Life, but deferred until and to be executed after the day of Judgment. If we endure more chastening and trouble than others who are greater sinners

sinners than our selves; *The Judge of all the Earth will do right*, so that Most certainly we shall fare better than they in the World that is to come.

From the things that have been spoken, it appears: That the way whereby we may avoid the *Wo* denounced against us upon the account of the day of our life going away, is to do these three things especially.

First, Be sure to finish that Work which God sent thee on this Earth for to do.

Secondly, Stand in awe and sin not, and abstain from all appearance of evil.

Thirdly, Pray without ceasing unto God, and labour earnestly to get all thy past Sins, Iniquities and Transgressions pardoned.

And take it for a general rule besides to be followed and observed: That whatever Trouble, sorrow Melancholy, fear, or such like doth arise in thy mind, there endeavour to know the true cause thereof. And then take away the cause, and the effect ceaseth. Be sure to answer all the requirings of God in thee. *Turn thou at my reproof*, Prov. 1. 23. That is, at the reproof of God in thy Soul and Conscience, whither the Lord be upon thee with a *still voice*, in the gentle motions and dictates of his Spirit; or if he doth *Instruct thee with a strong hand*, that thou shouldst not walk in the way of this people; That thou shouldst not do such a thing or such a thing, In all these or alike cases, *Do not turn away thy Ear, nor yet be Rebellious*. For this Life is the time of tryal and the day of Temptation in the Wilderness, wherein God doth prove thee whither thou wilt keep his Commandments or not. There is a *Wo* pronounced or else implied if thou shouldst turn away the Ear, or be Rebellious: Which same *Wo*, though it is now in word only, yet after the day of this life is gone, will fall down upon thee in Punishment and Misery.

The *Wo* or Threatning of God is of the like Nature with that *flying roll* or curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole Earth: For every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side, according to it: and every one that sweareth shall be cut off, as on that side, according to it, Zech. 5. 2, 3. Here

ing roll and curse is said to go forth over the face of the whole Earth, That is, for the present little time between, It doth hover somewhat above them, and it doth not pitch. But at length it will light upon the hairy scalp of the sinner, and it shall be done unto him according to the same flying roll, curse or threatening, when God shall wound the head of his enemies and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his Trespases.

If we did live in Righteousness and Holiness before him all the days of our life, we might serve God without fear, as may be understood from *Luke 1 74. 75.* But as long as there is Fear, Trouble, Sorrow, and a certain forebode or fearful expectation of a Wo to come, we should do well to take heed *2 Pet. 1. 19.* unto these as they may be Perceivable in our hearts; for all these do give notice and warning of some real future Evils to which they do relate.

Nay yet further, As saith the Apostle, *I know nothing by my self, yet I am not hereby justified.* So when we come to know nothing of Trouble, Fear or Misery as to futurity; and our Heart upon the utmost search and examination and enquiring diligently as to these things to come, doth not meditate terror (as very few do come up to this state) yet still even here we should not live securely, nor over confidently, but according to the counsel of the Spirit of God, who knoweth all things. *Pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. And work out our Salvation with fear and trembling.* But then here again is a great difference between a fear which excites caution and care, and another fear which hath Torment and gendreth bondage, as is the case of those who have not a well grounded hope.

It is the mind of the most high God, that his Servants as long as they are on this Earth, should be kept in a Low, Trembling and Dependant state and condition. Accordingly we Read in the Scriptures, That the best Saints have been most fearful and apprehensive partly of the Judgments, Wrath and Indignation of God as also what is consequent to that, of their own future state and condition. *When I heard my Belly tremble*

my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entred into my bones; and I trembled in my self, that I might have rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade me with his troups, Hab. 3. 16. For if when the Lord appeared on mount *Sinab* by his Angel only, so terrible was the sight that *Moses* (one of his best Servants and favourites) Said, *I exceedingly fear and quake.* Much more shall we exceedingly fear and quake, just as our Soul is taking flight into the invisible World, where we shall come nearer unto and have a much more sensible and lasting apprehension of the great God himself, then ever the *Israelites* had of the presence of his Angel on Mount *Sinab*. The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Which yet we must all do: *Unto thee shall all flesh come.* And when the Lord shall Judge his People, even his own Saints and Servants by reason of the exceeding strictness thereof, will have fears arising in their hearts also. And enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, for in thy sight shall no Man living be justified, Psal. 143. 2.

A Wo being pronounced against us indefinitely in the Text, for the day goeth away; this reaches and extends to the House of God, even his Children and Servants. For the time is come that Judgment must begin at the House of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.

The result of the whole is, The Spirit of the Lord doth speak, and his word is gone out indefinitely. Wo unto us, for the day goeth away; Therefore all we dying Creatures, should go softly all our years in the bitterness of our Soul; We should be in a very low and trembling condition, and wait all the days of our appointed time till our change come. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man, Luke 21. 36. Do your utmost diligence that ye may be accounted worthy to escape that Wo, which is pronounced: For the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

I shall now wind up the foregoing Discourse with these two practical uses and inferences.

The first use is of Warning.

The second use is of instruction.

As *John Baptist* said in his Preaching, *O generation of vipers: Who hath warned ye to flee from the wrath to come! Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.* So if I could speak to them all (O that the several Copies of these words might be made known unto them all) I would use a like form of speech. O ye Inhabitants of the Earth, Who hath warned ye to flee from the wrath to come? If ye say, the written word of God (who thereby warns us of things not seen as yet, Heb. 11. 7.) and the preaching of it by others. Ay, But here I would ask ye again, Have ye taken the warning? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and such fruits in your Life and Conversation, as are suitable and agreeable to those that are indeed warned to flee from the wrath to come. Are ye indeed and truly warned to flee from the wrath to come? What meaneth then that bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? What meaneth then throughout the Earth this joy and gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die. Are ye indeed truly warned to flee from the wrath to come? What meaneth then this iniquity of thy Sister Sodom (which is almost in all Cities Towns and Villages, but more especially in the House of rich People) Pride, fulness of Bread and abundance of Idleness was in her, and in her Daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. Are ye indeed thoroughly warned to flee from the wrath to come? Why then do so many say in their hearts, *My Lord delayeth his coming,* and they begin to beat the Men servants and the Maids servants, (or what is to the same effect, they torment and oppress their fellow Creatures) and they eat and they drink and are drunken. Take heed therefore least this be literally fulfilled upon ye to your endless misery and condemnation, And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered in-

in the Ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Like-
 wise also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank,
 they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. (It is now
 the very same in these our days) But the same day that
 Lot went out of Sodom, it rained Fire and Brimstone from
 Heaven and destroyed them all : Even thus shall it be in the
 day when the Son of Man is revealed. If the reasonable
 inhabitants of this Earth were like Noah here mentioned,
 warned of God of things not seen as yet, or if they did so take
 the warning of things, as they are made known in the
 Scriptures, then they would not seek to an *Arm of flesh*,
 or to Creature comforts and Creature contentments as
 now they do, to drive away the griefs and sorrows of
 a short, but yet a tedious and irksome life. They would
 not then so much resort to Ale Houses, Taverns, carnal
 company, idle recreations, the continual hurry of Word-
 ly business as now they do, only to forget and make
 themselves unmindful of that *Wo* which hangs over their
 heads because the day of their life goeth away. How can
 such Hear or Read such a Scripture without trembling ?
Ye have lived in pleasure on the Earth, ye have been wanton,
ye have nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter, Jam.
 5.5. For though there is as earnest a desire in the reasonable
 Creature after happiness and satisfaction as *Rachel* had
 after Children, *Give it me or else I die*, I had rather not
 be at all than not be happy ; yet here they would do
 well to *understand and seek after God*, and to know the
 order of his Dispensation and dealings towards the Chil-
 dren of Men, that is to say, to give them a being here,
 and a well being hereafter, to uphold them here, and
 make them happy and blessed for ever. They should be-
 lieve in God and trust in his Salvation : Have recourse to
 his word, and pacifie themselves with hope and expect-
 ation of better things to come ; look back upon the ex-
 ample of Saints heretofore, who were our *Brethren* in
 the flesh, and are now *partakers of the Heavenly calling*.
 Hence would spring up greater and more enduring com-
 fort than from Wine, strong drink, or from the outward
 diversifements of Wordly recreations or company. *And*
be not drunk with Wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled
with

with the Spirit. For as that same Spirit gives us a knowledge of the good things of God, which he will give unto those who Love, Fear and serve him; and as the same Spirit *Sealeth* unto us an Interest and Propriety in them, It takes of from and secures against the *Wo* for the *day goeth away*, much more than all the outward things of this World.

O that these words might go out unto the ends of the Earth, Why will not Men (who are made as Angels of God, knowing Good and Evil) know these things before hand? Especially when they are capable to know these things before hand, as they stand in the order and determination of our God. *Yea, the stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the Judgment of their God.* The Svallov hath lately observed the time of her going away again, but People do not observe, or they do not lay it so thoroughly to heart as they should, the time of their going out of this World, and their coming to appear before God. This will be the condemnation of Mankind that they will not do according to the knowledge and reason given them, as Beasts and Birds go and move according to that instinct implanted in them. However as God speaks by Ezekiel, *Son of Man, I have made thee a Watch Man unto the House of Israel: Therefore hear this word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.* God hath made the Ministers and Preachers of his word *Watch-Men* unto the Inhabitants of the Earth, and accordingly we hear the word at his mouth, as it is written in the *lively Oracles*, the *Book of the Lord*; and out of that we give them warning as from God. So that let people do as they will; *Whither they will hear or forbear, for they are most Rebellious:* Yet still the Scriptures with the true and faithful Preaching thereof, are a standing and continued warning unto the Inhabitants of the Earth, that all things are indeed so as they are therein spoken of.

Be wise therefore O ye Children of Men, Be instructed ye Inhabitants of the Earth, to order your conversation for the time to come according to the tenour and require-

of the same vvords. *Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the vvords of this prophecy, and keep those things which are vvritten therein, for the time is at hand, Even nearer then ever it vvvas yet.* And further, *Blessed is he that doth according to all those thoughts of Goodness and Truth which the Lord doth from time to time (vvhen he wakeneth Morning by Morning) put into our Soul.* Again on the other hand, a *Wo* or *Curse* belongs unto them vvho do not. *For the time is at hand, even just before us ; or as it is in the vvords of our Text, The day goeth away, and the shadows of the Evening are stretched out.* It is but a very little vvhile and the day vvill be quite gone avvay, and the shadowv of *Death* vvill be upon our eye lids, and each of us shall say, or vve shall find it so, *Mine age is departed and is removed from me as a shepherds tent, I have cut off like a weaver my life: He will cut me off with pining sickness : from Day even to Night wilt thou make an end of me.* Which as the everliving God doth by us poor dying Creatures, We should strive and vvork together with his grace, vvhich vvould vvork in us mightily if vve are obedient to it, that as our outvvard Man perish, the invvard Man is renewed day by day. *Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord vvhen he cometh, shall find so doing.*

FINIS.

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These are to give notice, That I have several other Practical Sermons or Discourses of mine own Composing lying by me in Manuscript: Which if they who have the Plenty or Competency of this World's Goods, would (*According to their several Ability, Acts 11. 29.*) Thus Consecrate some part of their gain and substance unto the Lord, Micah 4. 13. So as to be ready to distribute, and willing to Communicate towards the outward Labour and Charge of the Printing and Publishing of them, it would be for the Glory of God (*in making known his Truth, Isa. 38. 19.*) And for the Edification and Benefit of his Church and People; and consequently it would be a Good work in such Persons who shall be helpful and any ways assistant herein, for which they would be rewarded by God in the Life that is to come.

And I say unto you, Make to your selves Friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into Everlasting Habitations, Luke 16. 9. Charge them that are rich in this World, that they do Good, that they be Rich in Good Works, ready to Distribute, willing to Communicate, laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life, 1 Tim. 6. 17. 18. 19. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain Good Works; these things are Good and Profitable unto Men, Titus 3. 8.